Christ's Legacy of Peace

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Date: 14 August 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0:00] We're going to begin our worship, and our first item of praise is Psalm 65. Psalm 65, that's on page 82 of the Psalm books.

We're singing to a tune, Paisley, singing verses 1 to 7. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay.

To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray. When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay. You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. And so on, down as far as verse 7.

In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. And we stand to sing. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord.

[1:06] To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near.

You hear us when we pray. When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay.

You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

I bless you, Lord. And bring within your courts of grace.

We're filled with blessings in your eyes, in your most holy place.

[2:26] With awesome deeds of righteousness, you answer us, O God.

Our Savior, O God. Our Savior, O God. Our Savior, O Father, the sea and all the earth have brought.

By strength and power you formed the earth. You hashed the ocean's voice.

You can the true love of their ways. And still the people's joy.

We're now going to call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together and call upon God in prayer. O Lord, our God, we give thanks for the truth of these great words that we have been singing in your praise, for the way that we come to you tonight, knowing that you are the one who pardons our sin as we come seeking your forgiveness.

You are the one who washes us from our guilt and sets us in your presence in a way that is acceptable to yourself. We thank you for the manner in which you have chosen to do this, through all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done to provide us, O Lord, with the ground on which we can approach you, the salvation that we enjoy in our possession of it.

And we thank you tonight that as you are the God who created the creation that we have around us and ourselves, you are the one who formed and fashioned us, even in our mother's womb.

You are the one who brought into being all that exists around us and all the universe, even the farthest planets which we cannot see and which we are assured exist in various galaxies throughout the universe.

We thank you that they are all known to you, that you gave names to the stars, each and every one, for you, O Lord, brought them into being.

And so we marvel tonight that this great and glorious and holy God, who is so immense that we cannot but touch the very fringes of his being in our knowledge of him.

[5:13] And yet, Lord, your interest in us as human beings, as fallen sinful human beings, has been to provide us with redemption. We thank you, Lord, for the saving touch of your hand upon us, the way in which you bring to your people the necessary comfort and guidance and teaching, all that we require, Lord, in this life to overcome all that stands against us.

We give thanks that you are also the one who overcomes all that is true of our own limitation. You are the one who does not give us as we deserve, or else we would not be approaching you this evening.

But, O Lord, in your mercy, you have provided us with redemption. And it is on the basis of that mercy and on the merits of the Lord Jesus himself that we come to you this evening.

Lord, bless us, we pray here, these moments that we are gathered together. As we know, O Lord, how important it is for us to take from these moments the blessing that would truly benefit us for this coming week, but further blessed even towards eternity itself.

We ask that your Holy Spirit will actively bless us this evening, that we may not be content with a mere attendance in this place of worship, or with even an outward formality of gathering such a way as worshipers.

[6:47] Lord, we ask that you would bless us inwardly. Touch our hearts, we pray. Instruct and enlighten us in our minds. Give us in our will that we may have that urgency of seeking your glory and seeking that we be dedicated and consecrated to you in all that we seek to do.

Lord, we thank you as we reflect upon all that you have been to us thus far. We can truly say that you have blessed us abundantly and that your blessings have exceeded our ability to number them, for your blessings reach us day by day.

We thank you, Lord, for the blessings we have in the course of our ordinary life in this world, the things that we have recourse to enjoy day by day, the food that we eat, the shelter we have, the blessing of having friends and family, the many ways in which we are blessed under the gospel.

Lord, help us not to take these things for granted. And even when we find how readily we can access food and clothing and provision, O Lord, we pray that you would help us never to forget that we have them by your own blessing, lest we should indeed say that our own hand, our own ability, and our own deservingness have brought these things to us.

You are the God who instructed your people Israel long ago as they prepared to enter the promised land, that when they came to inhabit houses that yet they had not built and fields that they had not cultivated, a land that flowed with plenty, then, Lord, you gave them warning that they were not to conclude, that it was by their own wisdom or own ability that they had produced these things.

[8:33] Help us too, we pray as a nation, as we come before you and pray for the people that we belong to. We ask, gracious one, that you would come with your blessing and lift us up above all that is sinful, all that is of human wisdom.

And we pray that you would give to those who rule over us, especially as they be guided by your own word, by your truth, by your laws, by your promises. We pray for them, Lord, and ask that, as you instruct us in your word and require of us, to pray for those who are in authority.

So we do so now and ask, as we pray for them, that you would bless them and give them counsel and wisdom that is greater than their own and greater than any human being can produce.

And so we pray that you would bless also, Lord, the situation we find ourselves in, in your providence. When we find so much that causes us concern, we think of those, Lord, tonight who are feeling the effects of the increase in costs and the cost of living.

And we pray for those who have lost employment, those who are anxious about that, those who need to care for their families and wonder maybe from day to day if they're going to continue in employment.

[9:52] We pray for them. We pray, Lord, that you would grant that the world that has affected matters so much when so many nations are tied together in terms of economic circumstances.

Lord, we pray that you would bring a cessation of war, a cessation of violence, and grant to nations and people tonight that are beset with poverty, that you would bless them and help us from the resources that we have as a people to care for them and to be pleased, Lord, to minister practically to them.

We ask that you bless tonight those we know who are at this time mourning the passing of loved ones in this past week and in weeks gone by and even years. Lord, we know that the wounds that are opened through these providences are ongoing in a sore and difficult way for many people.

And we do pray that you would bless tonight those here under the gospel and elsewhere who require, Lord, the peace of God once again to come to calm their mind and to bring them assurance that you know their situation and that your provision for them in grace is always adequate to meet with our needs at all times.

Bless our children, our young people as they grow up and as they come to be taught at home in Sunday school, in Tweenies and even in Cresce. Oh, Lord, as they partake of gospel services here, we pray that you would bless this to them and make us thankful, Lord, that we have them for it gives us cause of optimism for the future that we see young families and children coming to take their place in the church of God on earth.

[11:37] And we do pray that they be sanctified under your truth and grow up to be to be true and lasting witnesses for you in the course of their life and for your grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Receive us now, we pray. Hear us and cleanse us from all our sin. We ask it all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise.

Our psalm this time is Psalm 37. This is in the Scottish Psalter on page 255. Page 255 in the Blue Psalm books.

We'll sing from verse 34 down to verse 40. June this time is St. Kilda. Wait on the Lord and keep his way and thee exalt shall he the earth to inherit when cut off the wicked thou shalt see.

I saw the wicked great in power spread like a green bay tree. He passed. Yea, was not. Him I sought but found he could not be. Mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness because that surely of this man the latter end is peace.

[12:56] And so on to the end of the psalm from verse 34 wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord and keep his way and the exalt shall be earth to inherit when cut off the wicked of the wicked thou shalt see.

I saw the wicked grieve in power tread like a green bay tree.

He passed ye was not him I sought what found he could not be.

Mark thou the perfect and behold the man of the brightness of the third shall bong he is wont the latter the latter endless perish yet those of the overextrisory shall be be destroyed together the larger end of wicked men shall be cut off forever but thus shall not the just is from the Lord above he in the time of their distress their still and strength doth prove the Lord shall help and lend the earth he shall them free and save from wicked men because in him their confidence they have let's turn now to read

God's word and we'll find our scripture tonight in John's gospel and chapter 14 gospel according to John chapter 14 we're going to begin reading at verse 15 and we'll read on down to the end of this chapter chapter and of course this is part of the teaching that Jesus gave the disciples as he was with them in the upper room just in the lead up to his arrest and on to the cross and so in John 14 and verse 15 we read as follows if you love me you will keep my commandments and I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you I will not leave you as orphans I will come to you yet a little while and the world will see me no more but you will see me because

I live you also will live in that day you will know that I am in the father and you in me and I in you whoever has my commandments and keeps them he it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world Jesus answered him if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him whoever does not love me does not keep my words and the word that you hear is not mine but the father who sent me these things I have spoken to you father will send in my name he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that

I have said to you peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid you heard me say to you I am going away and I will come to you if you I now I have told you before it takes place so that when it does take place you may believe I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming he has no claim on me but I do as the father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the father rise let us go from here Amen may God bless to us reading anew of his word before we turn to an aspect of that passage let's sing once again this time

Psalm 85 Psalm 85 and that's on page 112 sorry it's 113 we'll sing from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm the tune this time is Blaine Worm I will hear what God the Lord says to his saints he offers peace but his people must not wander and return to foolishness surely for all those who fear him his salvation is at hand so that once again his glory may be seen within our land love and truth have met together righteousness and peace embrace righteousness looks down from heaven from the earth springs faithfulness what is good the Lord will give us and our land its fruit will bear righteousness will go before him and his royal way prepare these verses

I will hear what God the Lord says I will hear what God the Lord says to the saints he offers peace and his evil must not wander and return to foolishness surely for all those who fear him his salvation is at hand so that once again his glory may be seen within our land love and truth have met together righteousness and peace and grace righteousness which comes from heaven from the earth streams faithfulness what is good the

Lord will give us and the rampage good will bear righteousness will go before him and his royal way prevail now for a short time let's turn together to Matthew sorry to John chapter 14 and verse 27 so it's John chapter 14 and verse 27 in particular peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid it's all too obvious isn't it as you look out over the world and even over our local community as well that our troubled world needs peace it needs a peace that we ourselves however cannot produce there are so many things that you see in the events of the world even at the present time that make it obvious that the need for peace is acute between wars terrorism famine diseases pandemic still aspects of that pandemic still lingering on even amongst our own community rise in the cost of living the shortage of material goods the increase obviously of anxiety throughout all through all of these and other things so many things in your own life personally and my life personally that cause us anxiety anxiety and worry over the future over loved ones over those who are ill over the loss of loved ones events that take place regularly in human life but that affect all of us at some point from time to time the world and we ourselves in it need peace we require our hearts to be calmed we require an assurance from God that all is well in his hands that whatever we are experiencing he does not make mistakes and here tonight we have a verse that tells us of Christ's legacy of peace the legacy of peace that he brought to the disciples notice as he spoke to them here peace

I leave with you my peace I give to you and especially as you look out over the world tonight and a search for peace and where peace is to be found sadly all too often people even at the highest level of government are looking for peace in all the wrong places for all the good intentions that people have of having peace between nations and peace between communities for as long as you look mainly to political and economic means of achieving peace it will never be the kind of peace that our heart needs it will never be the true and lasting peace that we were designed to enjoy in our creation by God and our Christian minds tell us that there is a peace that surpasses every other peace and it is this peace that Jesus spoke of and that he is pleased to give to those who trust in him to those who are his disciples my peace

I am giving to you not as the world do I give to you there is the great contrast between the search of the world and the world in John is the world of human beings in rebellion against God mainly the world in its own antagonism to God's truth not as the world gives do I give to you my peace I give to you the peace the source of peace for us tonight this peace is Jesus this peace that he speaks of here as a legacy that he has passed on to all who come to place their trust and confidence in him well of course in verse 28 he tells us something of the situation that caused the disciples here anxiety you have heard me say to you I am going away and I will come to you now of course at that stage they couldn't fully understand what he was actually saying here he was preparing them for his actual physical departure from this world and of course they could not possibly imagine what it would be like to not have him present with them they were anxious thinking about the very matter of Jesus no longer being with them teaching them directing them sometimes correcting them but he is there and he is there since they became disciples and now they have the prospect of him going away how are they going to cope how will they manage all of that is causing them so much anxiety and that's why Jesus now directs their thoughts to the peace that he is going to leave with them the peace that comes through his work of the cross through his death and resurrection this spiritual peace the peace that surpasses every other type of peace we know of and so tonight that's what we want to give our minds to for a little time looking firstly at this peace as a legacy of peace a peace that comes as a spiritual legacy to all of God's children to all of God's people and secondly and more fully it's actually a unique peace which he calls here my peace

I am giving to you it's unique because for one thing it's Christ's peace that he's passing on to his disciples it's unique because it contrasts with the peace that the world is able to give the kind of peace that is able to give and it's unique because it is also a calming peace let not your hearts be troubled he's saying in the light of the peace that he's going to give them so it's also a legacy of peace you notice how he begins here peace I am leaving with you my peace I'm giving to you now that's the language of legacy or will making or leaving a legacy to people you know yourself very well what that entails and when somebody's making out a will the will specifies that this is what's going to happen after I'm no longer here after I'm dead after I'm gone this is what I'm leaving this is who I'm leaving it to this is my will and testament my last will and testament and this is what you will then possess that person the testator is saying this is what I'm leaving to you this is what you will possess when I'm no longer with you and this is exactly what Jesus is saying in spiritual terms he is making out a legacy of peace to them that has come through his own death just as it is in the ordinary sense in which we have a legacy that's made out to those that are following us those that benefit from our last will and testament

Jesus is saying here is my last will and testament for you here is my peace that I'm leaving with you that I'm bequeathing to you that I'm passing on to you and for that of course we need to realize that the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus is part of his will-making process peace it is through that that he comes to leave that he came to achieve this peace and passes it on to his people remember he says in John chapter 10 in verse 17 how he says there that he is laying down his life when he says there for this reason my father loves me because I lay down my life that I might take it up again no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again this charge

I have received from my father you see what he is saying that God the father had given to him God the son this particular authority to lay down his life to actually give his life for his people to take the death which we deserve for our sin to take that to himself and then by his resurrection from the dead overcome death triumphantly and therefore obtain and receive for his people a legacy of peace that is how our peace the spiritual peace that you have as a Christian that's where it came from it wasn't manufactured by ourselves it's not something that was invented by the church it's not something that anyone short of Jesus himself has a hand in it is the peace of Christ the peace that he died to obtain and rose from the dead to obtain now you see if you go forward in John's gospel to chapter 19 you'll find something very interesting there chapter 19 at verse sorry chapter 20

I'm sorry at verse 19 chapter 20 and at verse 19 where you find Jesus of course having risen from the dead on the evening of that day the first day of the week the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews Jesus came and stood among them and said to them peace be with you and then you read in verse 21 Jesus said to them again peace be with you as the father has sent me even so I'm sending you so twice there he's saying peace be with you may this peace indeed be yours but you see what's in between sandwiched between those two statements where he peace peace be with you he showed them his hands and his side and the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord why is that there why is it arranged in that way why does he say first of all peace peace be with you and then show them his hands and his side and then again repeated peace be with you well because he's demonstrating for them there that the peace he's talking about has come to them through his hands and his side the wounds that actually they're confirmed that he is the same

Jesus who died and is now risen from the dead and that's so important a point in our theology this is not a different Jesus this is not a different person it's the same person and now in a state of life beyond death life over death life having accomplished this wonderful salvation for his people and it is in relation to the evidences of his death now as the risen Christ that he says peace be with you how important that emphasis is how important it is for you and for me tonight that that's the arrangement the gospel actually sets before us in terms of the peace that we need the peace that Jesus has for us it's peace that he bequeaths to us it's a legacy of peace that we draw from it's a peace that he is pleased to hand over to us but you don't get it without himself you don't have this peace in your heart and leave

Jesus out of your life you don't get this peace to enjoy in your as your savior he's talking here to his disciples to those who have started to follow him to those who have come to trust in him and here you are tonight and you're looking for peace and you need peace and I'm looking for peace and I need peace I need my heart to be assured that there is a peace that I cannot manufacture myself that there is a peace that will trusting in the one whose peace it is I get it by putting my faith in Christ by giving myself to him by saying Lord I need this peace and I cannot produce it and I'm going from one day to the next and I know that I still don't have it and even if

I do have it I need more of it I require it to be again and again multiplied for me my peace I give to you do you have peace in your heart tonight I'm not asking have you any anxieties we all have anxieties what I'm saying I'm asking is on the basis of this scripture do you have peace in your heart do you have this peace can you say with Horatia Spafford all these years ago in his hymn after the loss at sea that we spoke of not so long ago where his wife and children perished in the Atlantic where he composed this hymn as he went back from America to this country and where the captain of that ship as he came to the point where as near as possible was where the ship his family had been on sadly collided with another vessel and sank

Lord he said thou hast taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul whatever things come my way thou hast taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul why was that how could he say that well he could say it because he knew the peace of Christ and he knew that the peace of Christ overcame whatever anxieties or situations in his life he needed to face it didn't mean he didn't weep of course not it didn't mean we don't actually express our anxiety to God but here is the peace that comes to calm our heart to give us assurance that when we cannot actually put it all together when we cannot see how everything fits together in the experience that we're going through in the loss that we're experiencing in the hurt that we're experiencing in whatever it is has come our way that causes us anxiety and pain and distress when we can't put it all together when we cannot weave that tapestry we can come to

God and we can be assured it's all right it's in my hands it's my peace you need and have anxiety about it might be something entirely unknown to anyone else it might be something within your family circle it might be something to do with your work your place in the world but the beauty of this peace is it doesn't really matter what the source of the anxiety or the lack of peace is here is God's provision and God's solution my peace I give to you it is well it is well with your soul when your life is safe in the hands of Jesus so there's a legacy of peace a peace that came through his own death and resurrection to us but it's a unique peace as well it is as he says his own peace it's

Christ's peace my peace you see Christ is both the testator and the executor through the peace he has gone out of this world physically but he is still present with his people through his Holy Spirit that's what we read there I will not leave you as orphans I will come to you there's the uniqueness of Jesus he is someone who has made out a last will and testament of peace to his people and he has gone physically from this world but you cannot say of him that he is like every other testator like every other person who's bequeathed things to those that are coming after him they themselves are gone there's no sign of him but that's not the case with him I will come to you I will not leave you as orphans I will give you the helper the Holy Spirit and when he has come I will come and my father will come and make out home with you and there is

Jesus assuring us of his own presence and my peace of course again signifying the uniqueness of that peace as his Matthew Henry the Puritan commentator put it this way when Christ left the world he made his will his soul he bequeathed to his father he remembers words on the cross father into your hands I commit my spirit he bequeathed his will he bequeathed his soul to his father his body to Joseph his clothes fell to the soldiers his mother he left to the care but what should he leave his poor disciples who had left all for him silver and gold he had none but he left them what was far better he he left his peace he left them his peace the best thing he could give them is what he left for them this peace it is

Christ's peace but you see he's saying it's also very much a contrasting peace it's unique because it is his it is his personally it's what he died to achieve and it's unique because it contrasts with the peace that the world gives not as the world gives do I give to you well if you go to Ephesians chapter 2 let me just read there from verse 13 of Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 13 where you find but now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ by the death of Christ for he himself is our peace and he goes on to speak about reconciling Jew and Gentile together in one body in one spiritual body in one church but you see what he is emphasizing there is he himself is our peace he is our peace in every sense he is our peace when we have him we have this peace that doesn't mean we're not going to have difficult times or struggles in life it doesn't mean we're not going to have things which challenge us even in terms of our mental health as well as our spiritual health and our physical health that doesn't mean we're not going to have any of these things to actually face up to in this world but here is

Jesus saying this is my peace he is our peace I am your peace so tonight in order to have peace here is what you and I need more than anything else to have Jesus himself as your peace you cannot have peace without him you will never have peace without him you will never have an assurance in your soul that all is well if Christ is still out of occupancy of your heart if you have not actually received him willingly in the offer of the gospel and installed him by faith in your heart to be your living king but having that he is saying my peace I give to you now isn't that such an important point not just for ourselves but in the emphasis that we have in the gospel to bring to the world and that world out there in its need that doesn't really want to come to know the church or to know the gospel or to know salvation and sadly sometimes you find the gospel itself adjusted so as to take account of the peace of the world to actually have things the way the world sees it or the prevailing culture to fit in with the tone of the prevailing culture which seeks to cross out some of the more let's say offensive at least offensive to our human natural thinking the things of the gospel itself we can actually tone that down a wee bit we don't need to emphasize things like

God is actually one who has wrath as well as love we don't need to really just emphasize for people that there's a hell to be avoided and a heaven to be gained that sort of stuff because the gospel is as Jesus gave it to us salvation from our sins salvation into his righteousness delivered from our lack of peace with God our broken relationship with God and this is the peace that stands as the entire opposite when you come to have himself you have this peace and you have that peace because Jesus died to obtain it in other words you can't really you can't and I learned this from my own experience as well as yourselves I'm sure many of you can follow that for quite a long time well for certainly for many months after the

Lord had begun to show me my sin and the seriousness of my sin what did I start doing I started trying to produce peace I started trying to actually keep the commandments of God to tidy up my life to do things which by my own doing and my own performance would hopefully sense of guilt that I had in my soul and of course the more I tried that the more I failed and the more you will fail if you try that because none of that will give you this peace you cannot do it by your own obedience outwardly to the law of God you need to have as we said previously Jesus for yourself you need to have him willingly received into your heart that's where this new peace begins that's where this peace begins in a new heart now turning around of your heart in the direction of your life my peace I leave with you and of course that extends even into the wider world as well in many ways you can admire the attempts of politicians to bring about peace between warring nations whether it's in

Ukraine Russia wherever it is in Sudan wherever it is in the world you have violence and war you admire the attempts made by certain political figures to try and bring about peace how often is Jesus mentioned in that how often is God's peace mentioned at all in relation to lasting peace very little if any reference is made to it peace because it's all at our own attempts at producing peace and well intentioned though they may be and preferable though that may be to people setting out to kill each other

God

to enjoy to enjoy God may God bless God bless his word let's pray Lord grant tonight that we may know your peace in our hearts that we may have that experience of your Holy Spirit ministering peace to our troubled souls Lord teach us we pray in the midst of all that troubles us in this life teach us to look to you teach us to draw our peace from you teach us to enjoy your peace even in the midst of the troubles and the assurance that you know all that is required by us bless tonight those who have troubles and anxieties sometimes beyond what most other people have bless Lord any tonight here who have troubles that they know are greater than they themselves can manage and Lord we pray that your own peace will indeed be their portion and we pray that you would give them that calmness of heart to continue to trust in you even when their situation is challenging and so hear us now and be with us throughout the remainder of this week we pray and all we ask is in

Jesus name and for his sake amen we're now going to conclude our service this evening singing in Psalm 72 Psalm 72 on page 92 and these verses 1 to 7 to tune Duke Street this is a messianic psalm a psalm that brings us to consider Jesus the king of his people and here is a prayer for the Lord to endow the king with justice so that the peace that is his peace particularly will come and blossom in the world endow the king with justice Lord the royal son with righteousness your people your afflicted ones he'll judge with truth and uprightness verses 1 to 7 to God's praise and I the king with justice

Lord the royal son with righteousness your people your afflicted ones he'll judge with truth and uprightness the mountains will bring peace to them the hills the fruit of righteousness he will defend and save the poor and crush all those who them oppress as long as sun and moon endure so will he live time without end he'll be like showers on the air life brings the dawn moon fields descend the righteous end will blossom forth through light his everlasting rain rain until the moon no longer shines his sin abundance will remain

I'll go to the door down to my right this evening and now may grace and mercy and peace from God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and remain with you now and evermore Amen I'llk the event and I said how do little how could be well in the early Val you don't like you know going the